

NAVAL BASE PHILADELPHIA-
PHILADELPHIA NAVAL SHIPYARD,
BUILDING NO.523

HAER NO. PA-387-Z

Delaware Avenue, between East Fourth Street and Webster Avenue
League Island
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania.

HAER
PA
51-PHILA
709Z-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

NAVAL BASE PHILADELPHIA-PHILADELPHIA NAVAL SHIPYARD,
BUILDING 523

HAER No. PA-387-Z

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51-PHILA,
709Z-

Location:

Delaware Avenue, Between East Fourth Street
and Webster Island, League Island,
Philadelphia, Philadelphia County,
Pennsylvania

USGS Philadelphia, PA Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates
18/4415376N/ 476001E

Date of Construction:

1919

Engineer/Architect:

Unknown

Present Owner:

Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division - Ship
Systems Engineering Station

Present Use:

This structure is currently disused. It was last used as a
valve and pump house for fire protection.

Significance:

Building 523 is representative of infrastructure built to service
the Naval Aircraft Factory (NAF) Constructed in 1919, as the
valve house for the water tower (Structure 841) located
directly above it, Building 523 helped maintain the water
supply for the NAF complex. The pumping equipment in the
building was later converted for fire protection purposes. The
building is still located on its original site and has not been
altered.

Project Information Statement:

Building 523 is proposed for demolition due to structurally
unsafe conditions. To mitigate the adverse effect of the
proposed demolition, the Pennsylvania SHPO stipulated
documentation of the structure.

Project Historians

Steven Bedford Ph. D., Kristin Fetzner, TAMS Consultants,
Inc. 655 Third Avenue New York, NY 10017, February,
1998

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Summary Description of Building 523

Located on the southern side of the base, just north of Delaware Avenue between East Fourth Street and Webster Avenue, Building 523 is situated directly beneath a 100,000 gallon water tower (Structure 841). Building 523 is a small, unadorned, one story building, approximately 10 feet wide, 12 feet long, and 7 feet high. Resting on a concrete foundation, it is constructed of stucco-parged brick, capped by a concrete roof. A narrow water table rings the building at the juncture of the foundation and the walls. The roof is supported by wood joists that protrude through the eastern wall. Brick sills are visible beneath the plywood-covered, wood-framed, window openings on the north and south elevations. An exterior-mounted sliding door on the east wall, which consists of a four-light, one-panel, wood-framed door, provides the only access to the interior. The north, east and south walls rise above the roof to form a slightly projecting, metal-capped parapet. The interior of the structure consists of a steel cat-walk and stairs that provide access to a series of gauges, valves and pump controls. The lower part of the structure is flooded.

Building History

Building 523 is an example of the type of additional infrastructure built to service the Naval Aircraft Factory (NAF) during and immediately after World War I. In conjunction with Structure 841, the water tower above it, Building 523 helped to maintain a constant water supply to NAF buildings. It originally contained pumping, valve, and metering equipment. It was later used as a valve house for fire protection systems such as sprinklers and hydrants.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Cultural Resources Survey of the Naval Complex of Philadelphia prepared by John Milner Associates, Inc. 1994.

R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. *Support and Utility Structures and Facilities (1917-1946): Overview, Inventory, and Treatment Plan*. Prepared for Department of the Navy, Atlantic Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 1995.

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